

It's Just a Matter of Habit – Turn Off the Water When You Don't Need It!
By Linda Cawley, IDWR Public Information Specialist

It's no secret that we couldn't exist without water. But as Idaho approaches its sixth consecutive year of drought conditions, it's a good time to think about living with less water on a daily basis.

- Did you know that by shortening your showers by even a minute or two each day you can save up to 700 gallons of water each month? By installing water-saving showerheads or flow restrictors, you can save another 500-800 gallons of water each month.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator so you don't have to let the tap run for a while before the water is cold. To help reduce the use of excess glasses in the dishwasher, encourage each family member to one glass per day.
- The most effective and inexpensive way to reduce your faucet use is by installing a low-flow faucet aerator on all your household faucets.
- Be sure to turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Wait until the dishwasher is full before turning it on. This also helps reduce the amount of energy used to heat the water.
- Be sure to check your indoor water-using appliances for leaks. Studies show a home can waste more than 10 percent of its water due to leaks, which costs both you and the environment.
- When washing clothes, set the regulator for the size of load. Remember to use cold water, instead of warm or hot, for both washing and rinsing to help save energy.

What about outdoors?

- Do you know when your lawn needs water? Step on your grass. If it springs back when you lift your foot, it doesn't need water.
- If you have an automatic sprinkler system, set the timer so it allows more days between watering and multiple start times spaced one hour apart. This allows the water to soak into the soil and runoff.
- Install a rain shutoff device on your sprinkler system. Allowing your sprinkler to continue working while it's raining can waste a lot of water.
- Before you start using your automatic sprinkler system, check the sprinkler valves and heads for leaks.

- Water your lawn during the cooler parts of the day. Early morning is better than dusk, because it helps prevent the growth of fungus. Avoid watering the lawn on windy days. There's too much evaporation.
- When washing your car, don't leave the water running through the hose unnecessarily. Use a bucket of water to wash your vehicle, then rinse it with running water.
- Consult your local nursery before planting grass and shrubs. Plants and grass that need less water can accomplish the same goal as those that need a lot of water.

Each person in the United States uses about 50 gallons of water a day. By consciously working to conserve this natural resource, you can help save the environment and still have a refreshing drink of water whenever you turn on your faucet.